



# Golden Gate National Recreation Area Meeting Notice

## Options for Management of Beach Fires at Ocean Beach (revised)

At the next scheduled Golden Gate National Recreation Area public meeting on March 18, the issue of proposed regulations for the management of beach fires at Ocean Beach will be presented and public comment will be taken.

**Current Situation:** The Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) currently allows beach fires on Ocean Beach from Stairwell 14 (near Fulton) south to Sloat Boulevard. Park rules require all fires to be less than three feet in diameter and prohibit the burning of creosote-treated wood, pallets, furniture, and garbage. Permits are not required unless the group is larger than 25 people. Groups larger than 25 and artists wishing to build ceramic pit fires must apply for a special use permit.

**Problems:** The current situation has resulted in serious public health, safety, and sanitation problems. Smoke from beach fires, especially from burning creosote, often drifts into nearby neighborhoods, creating problems for residents and complaints to the park. Beach users have been burned by smoldering embers and cut by broken glass. Alcohol consumption (including underage drinking) at beach fires has led to law enforcement concerns. Litter left by large beach fire groups is a frequent eyesore at Ocean Beach.

### Alternatives:

1. **No action.** The park does not consider this a viable option, due to the chronic nature of the problems associated with fires at Ocean Beach.
2. **Existing policy, plus public education.** This alternative presumes that current problems with beach fires are simply due to lack of information about existing rules and problems associated with beach fires. It presumes that with proper education beach fire builders would regulate themselves. This alternative would require the NPS to work with the City of San Francisco, community groups, and interested stakeholders in developing and implementing a program to educate beach fire users about the existing policies. Resources for the education program do not currently exist and would have to be secured.
3. **Existing policy, plus permit system.** This alternative would allow beach fires to continue where they are currently permitted (Stairwell 14 to Sloat Blvd.), but require every person who builds a beach fire to obtain a permit from the park. Permits would be either low-cost or free of charge. Means and location for obtaining permits has not been determined. Staffing and other resources to administer and enforce the permit system do not currently exist and would have to be secured. An education campaign in cooperation with interested groups would precede any enforcement.
4. **Confine area where fires are allowed.** This alternative would confine beach fires to the area between Stairwell 14 (near Fulton) and Stairwell 28 (near Lincoln). All other current rules regarding beach fire size and fuels would remain in effect. This alternative allows beach fires to continue, but without impacts to neighboring residents, and with reduced maintenance/safety/law enforcement problems. This alternative could be implemented with or without a permit system. An education campaign in cooperation with interested groups would precede any enforcement.
5. **Ban all fires on Ocean Beach.** This alternative would prohibit all fires on Ocean Beach. A ban would prevent many of the problems associated with beach fires, but would eliminate a traditional use of Ocean Beach. An education campaign in cooperation with interested groups would precede any enforcement.